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PCAccent for December 2007
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Welcome to PCAccent. This newsletter is an adjunct, an "accent" if you will, to the PCA's Web site and the PENnant. The Board of Directors will use PCAccent to keep you informed about PCA news and happenings.

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS NEWSLETTER! For comments or questions, send email to PCA President Rick Propas. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please send email to Membership Coordinator Kim Sosin. Email addresses for Rick and Kim can be found on the PCA's Web site:

<http://www.pencollectors.com/>

*** A Word on Membership ***

For some time now there seems to have been a disconnect with regard to memberships and renewals, as far as we can tell, since the summer of 2007. Some folks have not had checks cashed, others have not had renewals processed in a timely manner if at all.

For this we apologize. More importantly, we have taken steps to remedy the situation with both new systems and new personnel. Please bear with us while we straighten things out, and if you have any issues with membership, feel free to communicate with Rick Propas or Kim Sosin.

*** Presidential Points, by Rick Propas ***

Welcome to the first issue of PCAccent. Right now we're not sure how often it will come out, that will depend on your feedback and our news. Let us know how you like it.

First off, let me thank our editor Richard Binder. Without his skill in putting out his own newsletter, Nib Noise, you would not have these electrons before you.

Over the past year, there has been a great deal of change at the PCA. Under the direction of President Dan Reppert, in 2007 we began re-engineering the PCA from top to bottom. We now have new by-laws, adopted in February, which we hope soon to have up on the Web site. In summer, Dan also initiated the first of a series of Board Retreats in which we received professional training from Sonya Mawhorter.

Elections at the end of summer saw the advent of four new members (one the result of a resignation): Richard Binder, Deb Kinney, Carla Mortensen (returning after a "sabbatical") and Kim Sosin. The new Board has asked me to serve as President.

I remain committed to the process initiated by Dan and Sonya and I am in the process of implementing a committee structure by which this new Board hopes to become more effective. There may be (and have been) a few bumps as we start on this road, but please bear with us. We are a work in progress.

I am pleased, also, to note a new addition to our editorial staff for The PENnant. Richard Jarvis has agreed to come on Board as Managing Editor to backstop Anna Lawson. He joins Anna; Tom and Dede Rehkopf, our Associate Editors; and Fran Conn, our designer.

Elsewhere in this issue you will hear from Kim Sosin, who is our new Membership Coordinator and from Linda Bauer on Pens for Kids and a new look for the Web site. Early next year we plan to fully redesign the Web site, making it far more interactive than it now is.

Also you will hear from Richard Binder on our progress in digitizing the PCA library, a long term goal that is starting now.

With regard to membership, Kim is being joined by Deb Kinney, Bruce Mindrup, Dan Reppert and Kim Svabik, who will be our new member outreach person.

Good things are happening. We hope you find the news herein to be interesting and informative. and we urge you to communicate with us via email.

Rick Propas

*** The Pens For Kids Program, by Linda Bauer and Bill Hong ***

Under the coordination of Board member Linda Bauer, the PCA sponsored Pens for Kids workshops at the Ohio and Chicago shows in 2007. Workshops were designed to foster an interest in pens and pen collecting in the next generation. The PFK workshops also stressed the importance of handwriting and personal expression in communication.

The workshops were open to "kids of all ages." About 30 people, including kids, their parents and grandparents, attended the first workshop at the Chicago show in May. The hour-long workshop featured a slide presentation with a brief history of pens, slides of various styles of pens, and images of nibs and filling mechanisms. Each attendee received a student fountain pen. Participants used their new pens in a handwriting exercise, and each also received a Pens for Kids note card to use for a personal note to a friend or family member.

In addition to the slide presentation, the PFK workshop at November's Ohio show featured special guest Jack Leone of Ohio's Bexley Pen Company. Jack talked about how Bexley pens are designed and manufactured. He brought Bexley pen parts for the kids to assemble.

The Pens for Kids slide presentation is available as a PowerPoint presentation to members who wish to promote Pens for Kids in their local schools. Contact Linda Bauer for more information. You can find Linda's email address on the PCA Web site.

The PCA is looking for a few good schools! Two high schools in each State, in fact. As an adjunct to the Pens for Kids program, PCA is gathering nominations to offer free subscriptions to the PENnant to a pair of high schools in each State. The request with each subscription will be that the recipient schools make space for the PENnant on their shelves of current periodicals. We'll send them a sample copy of the PENnant along with a letter making the offer.

This pilot program is a way to bring to high school students more knowledge of the heritage of writing instruments and the importance of the handwritten word to our culture. We have nominations for a number of schools already in about half a dozen states, but can always use more. If you have a school you'd like to nominate, let us know its name and location, and if possible a point of contact (Principal, or Head Librarian) whom the PCA may contact. Thanks!

*** MCA Member Services, by Kim Sosin ***

The Membership Chair is a new position that the PCA Board has created to place a renewed emphasis on recruiting and serving our members. The Board retreat in August identified a number of possible activities for the membership chair. Although these haven't been officially accepted yet by the Board, the following activities arose from the retreat and subsequent discussions:

- * Develop an official membership committee and job description
- * Identify personnel for the membership committee, both Board and non-Board members
- * Oversee maintaining updated records of the membership
- * Conduct an annual membership drive with membership rewards identified
- * Work with the marketing committee and newsletter editor to develop new member advertising literature
- * Oversee member recruiting at pen shows and on non-PCA Web pages
- * Create a schedule of special PCA-related events for the Web site and mailings
- * Poll members for their views on issues of relevance to the organization
- * Work with the Board to build community confidence in the PCA

We were working towards the goal of having 2000 members in five years, up from a current base of about 1230. My first priorities as membership chair are to oversee the membership recordkeeping, see that the new member packets are mailed quickly, and maintain new member recruiting at pen shows and in mailings. Clearly one volunteer Board member cannot carry out all of the activities, so our next order of business is to establish a membership committee. Thanks to Roger Wooten

and Carla Mortensen for their help with member records. In addition, Kim Svabik, our pen show "face," is working with Terry Mawhorter on pen show presence. We are grateful to Dan Reppert, former Board member and president, who continues to send out the new member packets.

If you have questions about PCA membership, I encourage you to contact me; of course, you may ask any Board member. (Email addresses for all members of the Board can be found on the PCA's Web site.) We are still defining the various duties of this position and welcome your input on ways to enhance PCA services to the membership!

*** Web Site News, by Linda Bauer ***

At the PCA Board retreat in August in Washington, DC, the Board discussed additional services for members, better communication, and getting members more involved in PCA decisions. One of the projects discussed was a new PCA Web site.

Over the next few months, we would like feedback from the membership on what you would like to see on the PCA Web site in the future. What kind of information, interactivity, features, etc. Would you like to be able to post pictures of your collection? Would you like a chat Board? Would you like to download items from the library? We'd also welcome ideas on what the Web site should look like. Should we have more photos? Artwork? Different navigation?

Based on this feedback, we will create a requirements document and then solicit proposals from Web designers for a new, interactive PCA Web site. This process would be coordinated by a committee comprised of Board members as well as general members of PCA.

If you have ideas and feedback, please email them to PCA Board Member Linda Bauer.

In the short term, we're making a few changes to the site, including reorganizing the headers, adding some color and converting from frames to templates to make it easier to update. You'll see these early next year. But before we make any major changes, we want to hear from YOU.